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AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

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THE COUNTY FARM BUREAU

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THE FUNCTION OF THE FARM BUREAU

A farm bureau is an organization of farmers and ranchers who combine to promote agriculture through coöperative study of farm conditions.

Many types of farmers' organizations have long been existent. There have been farmers' clubs, granges, institutes, unions, alliances, and others. Some of these have been more or less successful, but many have passed away. Their failure has usually been due to one or more of the following causes: (1) lack of a distinct purpose to fill a definite need; (2) lack of membership to sufficiently represent all classes of farmers and types of farming; (3) lack of coöperation with other similar farm organizations; (4) lack of continuous and unselfish leadership.

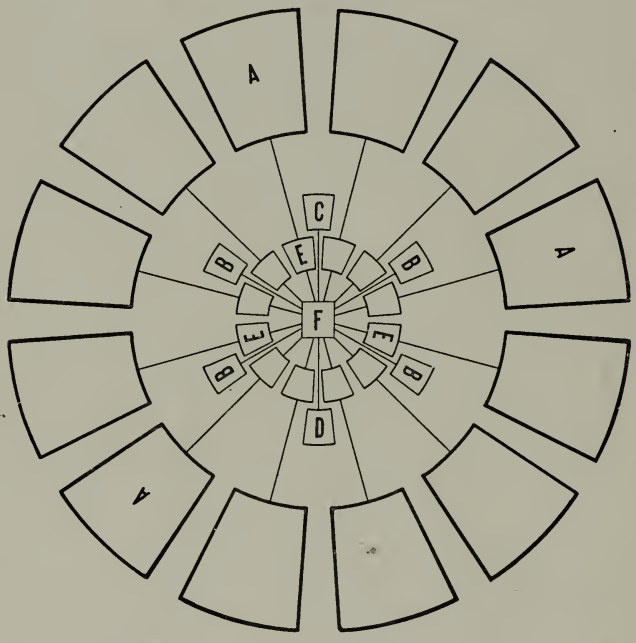
The farm bureau is distinct from all of these. It is not primarily a social organization; neither is it essentially to unite farmers so as to lower prices of stuffs bought and to raise prices of products sold. It is formed to bring together for mutual coöperation those farmers who want to investigate the fundamental problems that are involved in production on their farms.

Every state and territory has at least one "experiment farm" supported by federal and state funds. These have been exceedingly valuable because the results therefrom were noted by men whose business and interest it was to observe. The acreages of these farms were small; their crops were often meagre—and yet they have been worth millions beyond their cost because the records of productions and the conditions under which they were grown were known and noted.

Many of our farm problems are already solved on the farms of the nation. Individuals have found the solution of vexing questions that are agitating the experiment stations and agricultural colleges. But

these solutions usually fall out of sight unnoted or are known only to the man on whose farm they occur. If these unknown and unnoted experiments could be gathered, they would at once add much to our view of agriculture.

ORGANIZATION PLAN OF THE COUNTY FARM BUREAU



A = 12 Centers

B = Four Directors at Large

C = Vice-President

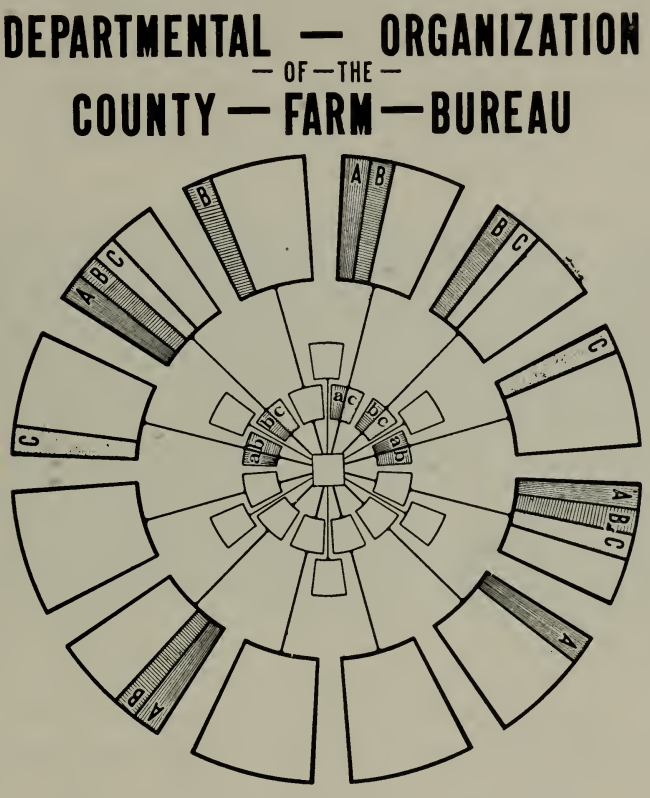
D = Secretary

E = 12 Center Directors

F = President

The county farm bureau is divided geographically into ten or twelve centers. Each center elects a director. These with the president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and four directors at large, make up the Board of Directors which meets once a month.

In America there are on the average more than 100,000 farms to each "experiment farm." Obviously, if the results on some small percentage of these could be viewed from the same standpoint as at the experiment farm, the benefits would enormously outnumber the


DEPARTMENTAL — ORGANIZATION
— OF — THE —
COUNTY — FARM — BUREAU
A = Swine Breeders' Committee of the Farm Bureau Centers
a = " " " " " County Farm Bureau
A + a = Swine Breeders' Department of the Farm Bureau
B = Cow Testing Committee of the Farm Bureau Centers
b = " " " " " County Farm Bureau
B + b = Cow Testing Department of the Farm Bureau
C = Any Committee of the Farm Bureau Centers
c = The same Committee of the County Farm Bureau
C + c = The same Department of the Farm Bureau

Soon after a county farm bureau is organized departments are formed for those having similar interests. Each department organizes with sections in the centers concerned. The affairs of the department are administered through a committee of the Board of Directors who in turn report to the entire Board.

records achieved by the experiment stations. It is, of course, impossible to gather all this material or to note all the changing conditions on farms. But it may be possible to gather together into one county organization the wide-awake and interested farmers who will compare their results with those of others and, in a more or less scientific way, plan out experiments and demonstrations on their own farms. Such is a farm bureau.

Fundamentally, then, a farm bureau for the county can be collectively a sort of giant experiment station with several hundred observers who hold a monthly caucus to compare results.

The farm bureau has a trained man to aid it: the farm advisor. (See Circular 133.) It is his business to help interpret results, to point out new lines of work, and to deduce conclusions from the evidence at hand. The farm bureau can be of greater value to the county than the farm advisor. Together they can be of more benefit than either alone.

Other activities may concern the farm bureau besides local research into agricultural problems.

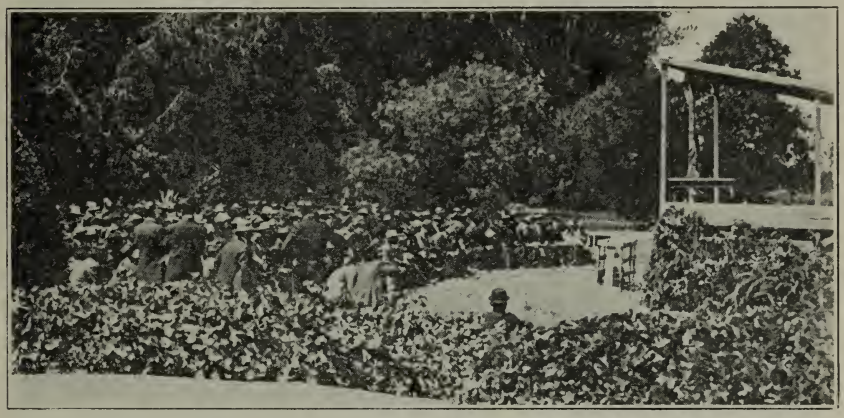
The farm bureau may be a sort of rural chamber of commerce and thus be the guardian of rural affairs. It can take the lead in agitation for good roads, for better schools, and for cheaper methods of buying and selling. Various subsidiary organizations of the farm bureau, known as farm bureau departments, may be formed, thus linking together persons of similar or identical interests. Perhaps, most of all, the farm bureau can help promote the social institutions of country life. Some rural neighbors are so starved for recreational meetings that they will come out to anything from a patent-medicine show to a school meeting. The farm bureau can help put more recreation into rural life. Every country neighborhood ought to have some social gathering at least once a week. It is almost as much needed as the spiritual congregations at the church, or the educational assemblages of the children at the schoolhouse.

But very surely and insistently the farm bureau is not first and foremost of these purposes—good and desirable as they may be. Perhaps the farm bureau can help to buy cheaper and better seeds, can help to boost the local socials, can encourage the faltering school teacher, can get out and talk for good roads—but its first and surest function is to increase the local knowledge of agricultural fact.

THE GENERAL PLAN

The membership of the farm bureau is composed of those persons in the county interested in agriculture who desire to promote its prosperity through the formation of a county organization to which they pay a membership fee each year. A county farm bureau should have at least one-fifth of the farmers in its membership.

The whole membership of the farm bureau meets together but once a year at its annual meeting in the fall. At that time the general



Often the organization of a farm bureau is started by a big county meeting to which every one is invited.

officers are elected—president, vice-president, and four directors at large.

For practical purposes the county organization is divided, along geographical lines, into ten or twelve farm bureau centers. Each center that has ten or more members elects a director as leader. He acts as chairman of the meetings and represents the center on the board of the county farm bureau.

Thus, if there are ten centers in the county, there will be fourteen directors on the board: four at large and one from each of the ten centers.

These directors, with the county president and vice-president, usually hold a meeting once a month when reports are heard from the various centers and the general plans for the movement in the county are considered.

The officers elect a secretary-treasurer, who holds the funds and keeps the records of the farm bureau.

The farm bureau is financed by dues which its members pay into the central county organization. The expenses of the bureau are those of hiring offices, the carrying on of correspondence, printing of pamphlets, etc. Sometimes, but not usually, the farm bureau pays the expenses of the directors who come to the board meetings once a month. Usually no funds are required to conduct the farm bureau center organizations, but if necessary the members of a center may vote to levy on themselves a small additional fee.



The farm bureau directors meet once a month at the county seat to determine the agricultural policies of the county.

THE GENERAL MEETING ONCE A YEAR

The annual meeting—at which the election of officers takes place—is held in the fall, usually at the county-seat. It should be so arranged as to make it a matter of considerable local interest and importance—it may be an all-day gathering to which speakers of note are invited; it may sometimes take the form of a large public banquet, or of a country picnic. The main effort is to have present a large proportion of the membership of the entire farm bureau in order that the officers elected may be adequately representative of the whole community and that once a year the organization may realize its strength and its large membership.

THE DIRECTORS' MEETING ONCE A MONTH

The directors of the farm bureau meet every month—usually on a Saturday—at the farm bureau offices or at the farm advisor's offices. These meetings should be of such vital interest that the entire board of directors will be present. At these meetings the agricultural policies of the county should be determined, committees appointed, reports heard from each of the directors representing a farm bureau center, and from all departmental committees, and a general consideration given to the plans of the farm bureau and the farm advisor. The meetings may or may not be open to the public. In some cases it has



The farm bureau has its headquarters at the office of the farm advisor located at the county seat.

been thought wise to have the directors, at the conclusion of the morning meeting, lunch together at a local hotel or restaurant in order that there may be some social phase to the day's proceedings.

THE FARM BUREAU CENTER MEETINGS ONCE A MONTH

The farm advisor, by regular appointment, may be present one day a month in each center of the farm bureau. Thus, if there are ten or twelve centers, he will have ten or twelve definite appointments each month for his local work. It is not usually possible for a farm advisor to meet with more than a maximum of thirteen centers. Since the effective work of a farm bureau requires the leadership of the farm

advisor, it is highly desirable that the county be so districted that not more than thirteen centers need be formed to cover all the probable places at which farm bureau centers will be required.

The usual method of the farm advisor is to come at once to the home or office of the local farm bureau director and to learn from him those who desire to have the farm advisor call at their farms on that day. He then spends his entire day—or two days if necessary—going about the neighborhood seeing those who desire his services. The farm advisor never goes to any except those who so request.

Usually the farm bureau center has its meeting the night when the farm advisor is there. These meetings may be open to the public, but should be serious discussions of questions pertinent to the farm prosperity of the neighborhood. To this end it is proposed that some of the local meetings of the farm bureau centers be devoted entirely to a study of some one phase of agricultural practice. For example, if lime is a pertinent question for the neighborhood, the farm advisor may explain in detail all the forms of commercial lime, using a blackboard if necessary to make it all clear. The members may bring notebooks and write down such points as interest them. Other subjects, such as "sprays and spraying," "balanced rations," and "methods of testing seeds" may well occupy one or several meetings in order to cover them in such a way that all can gain a true comprehension of the subject. It will take real old-fashioned study to do it. But that is the function of the farm bureau.

Sometimes the members of a farm bureau center go in automobiles for a well planned day to see demonstration plots that show definite results, to look at a well built barn or a well bred herd. Such a trip is an inspiration as well as a source of more knowledge. But it must be undertaken with a serious purpose and not as a junket.

Some of the meetings may be open to the public and take on a more distinctively social feature. But if, as often happens, the presence of others hamper freedom of discussion and a real promotion of the subject, it may prove better to discourage the attendance of persons not members of the bureau and to hold the "social meetings" at other times.

THE DEMONSTRATIONS ON SELECTED FARMS

In order to further promote an understanding of some of the methods advanced by the farm advisor, it may be desirable to have demonstrations of these located on scattered farms throughout the county. Usually these demonstrations are placed with the most interested and active members of the farm bureau.

If, say, the farm advisor desires to locate fifty demonstrations through the county, he may ask each of the directors representing a center to nominate five members with whom demonstrations may be placed. These members agree to undertake the management of one piece of land, section of orchard, or group of animals as directed by the farm advisor in order to demonstrate some fact of agricultural importance to the neighborhood.

Usually farms supplied with such demonstrations are called "demonstration farms" and the owner is know as a "demonstrator." Often



The farm bureau director is the responsible officer of the farm bureau center. The farm advisor travels around on schedule to each center once a month, visiting farms and holding a meeting there.

the farm bureau supplies signs to be placed on the gatepost or a roadside tree on the farm where such a demonstration is located. These signs read, "Demonstrator, ... County Farm Bureau."

DEPARTMENTS OF THE FARM BUREAU

Soon after a county farm bureau is organized there is a renewed activity and interest along the several lines of agriculture represented among its members. Even in one farm bureau center these are often of diverse agricultural interests because their farms turn out diverse products. Thus those of like interest may desire to form subsidiary organizations for more frequent meetings or for more direct work along

their specialty. For example, the dairyman may wish to carry on co-operative cow testing, to purchase pure-bred sires, or to market their product; the swine raisers may wish to stamp out hog cholera or to specialize on one breed of hogs; the alfalfa growers may desire to uniformly grade their hay or to store it in coöperatively owned warehouses. These needs are met by the organization of departments within the farm bureau. There may be a "Cow-testing Department," or a "Dairy Department"; a "Swine Breeders' Department"; an "Alfalfa Growers' Department," and others.

Each department organizes with sections in each center wherein there are interested members. Each section in a center has a Farm Bureau Center Committee on Swine Raising (for example), which renders a monthly report at the regular center meeting for the swine



Meetings are held regularly every month at every farm bureau center. The farm advisor is present, but the farmers run the meeting. Both men and women attend.

raisers' section of the center. This report is transmitted by the center director to the committee of the board of directors, known as the Farm Bureau Committee on Swine Raising, which in turn reports for the whole department at the regular meeting of the Board of Directors. The secretary-treasurer of the farm bureau is treasurer of all departments and the Board of Directors are the final court to pass upon all plans and reports of the several departments.

By this means the united agricultural force of the whole county is given to the enterprises undertaken by any department, so that financial, moral and universal backing is given to a group of men who, standing alone as an outside organization, could not find sufficient

strength to accomplish effectively the end desired. The several departments may become of prime importance to the members, but if all are kept within the initial county farm bureau organization and, as above, clear their activities through the Board of Directors, the county can still present a united agricultural front.

HOW TO FORM A FARM BUREAU

The movement for a farm bureau usually starts from some interested persons in the county who feel it desirable to have such an organization to further its agricultural interests.

Often it is the chamber of commerce that makes the start to call the matter to the attention of the people. Sometimes it is a small



Demonstrations of successful agricultural methods are located by the farm advisor on the farms of interested members of the farm bureau.

farmers' club, grange, or farmers' union that issues the call for a county-wide organization. However the matter begins, the fundamental point is that it shall be a voluntary organization of farm people who realize the need for such a gathering of the rural forces of the county.

There have been two methods used to organize farm bureaus in this state.

The most general method has been to call a big meeting which is advertised in every way possible. Usually the invitations are sent out by a self-appointed committee who try to arouse all the people of the county. Sometimes these send out postcards to every farmer in the county, getting the list from the office of the county tax assessor, or

some other public place of record. Usually the meeting is held in some big hall or on a picnic ground; sometimes there is a brass band and social features to the occasion. Almost always it is an all-day meeting. If requested, speakers are sent from the College of Agriculture. At this meeting a constitution and by-laws are adopted; the members pay to the county organization a membership fee as their first year's dues; and a president, vice-president and four directors at large are elected. At some later time these officers, meeting together, divide the county into ten or twelve geographical districts. The members of the county farm bureau living in each district then form themselves into a farm bureau center and elect a director to represent them on the board of the farm bureau. This method has been generally used and may, in most cases, prove most successful. It starts the organization off with a big day and calls it to the attention of all the people.

The other method is the reverse of this. A committee of interested persons, a chamber of commerce, or a board of trade holds small meetings in different sections of the county that might become farm bureau centers. At these meetings those present, if they so desire, join the farm bureau, pay membership fee, and afterward elect a director to serve on the board of the farm bureau. After the ten or twelve centers have been formed, the directors so elected meet and call a general meeting at which a constitution and by-laws are adopted and a president, vice-president, and four directors at large are elected. This method has been used in counties where the farmers did not have sufficient primary interest to come together at a large county meeting, or where the people of the county were so scattered as to make it difficult to bring them together at any one place.

CONSTITUTION

The following constitution and by-laws (Reprint, with some corrections, from Circular 118 of the College of Agriculture) is that which has been adopted in farm bureaus of the state:

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS FOR THE .....
COUNTY FARM BUREAU

PREAMBLE.—In order to promote the agricultural interests of this county and all its enterprises dependent upon agriculture, we, the undersigned, do hereby form a permanent organization under the following constitution and by-laws.

ARTICLE I. NAME.—The name of this organization shall be the ..... County Farm Bureau.

ARTICLE II. OBJECT.—The object of this organization shall be to assist the Farm Advisor in this work in the county and to aid him in the development of

agriculture and such allied industries as may properly come within his province, including the betterment of social, home, school, and church conditions in the county.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP.—Any person resident of ..... County or an owner of farm land in the county, interested and willing to aid in the development of the agriculture of the county, may become a member of this bureau by agreeing to this constitution and paying to the county organization an annual membership fee and such other dues as may be regularly assessed.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS AND DUTIES.—Section 1. The administration of the affairs of the ..... County Farm Bureau shall be vested in the following officers: a president, a vice-president, a secretary-treasurer, four directors at large, and one director to be elected as hereinafter provided from each regularly organized farm bureau center through the county.



The farm bureau organizes excursions to go with the farm advisor to look at successful demonstrations and learn from them.

Section 2.—The directors at large shall be elected by the whole bureau, not more than one from one center. Each center director shall be elected by the members of the bureau living in the center concerned. The secretary-treasurer shall be elected by the officers.

Section 3.—The term of office of all officers shall be one year, or until the next annual meeting.

Section 4.—All the officers excepting the secretary-treasurer shall be elected at the regular annual meeting.

Section 5.—At all elections a majority of votes cast shall be necessary to elect. Vote shall be by ballot.

Section 6.—Each officer shall be entitled to one vote.

Section 7.—The president shall preside at all the meetings of the officers or of the bureau, appoint all standing committees and perform all other duties not otherwise provided for.

Section 8.—The vice-president shall perform the duties of the president in his absence.

Section 9.—The secretary-treasurer shall keep a record of the proceedings of the bureau, receive the membership fees and assessments, have custody of all funds of the bureau, and of all departments therein, and shall make a full report at each annual meeting, or at such time as the bureau may direct. He shall pay out money only on orders signed by the president and countersigned by himself.

Article V. Vacancies.—The officers shall have power to fill all vacancies.

Article VI. Meetings.—Section 1.—The bureau shall hold a regular annual meeting during the early fall, the date and place to be set by the officers and announced at least two weeks prior to the time of meeting.



The farm advisor and the farm bureau are efficient because they have the aid of the agricultural institutions of the state and the nation. Specialists are sent to give demonstrations on timely subjects.

Section 2.—The officers shall hold a regular monthly meeting at the office of the Farm Advisor.

Section 3.—It shall be the duty of the president to call special meetings of the bureau at the request of a majority of the officers, and notice of same must be given in advance.

Article VII. Committees.—The committees to be appointed shall be made up of persons suggested by the Farm Advisor and approved by the officers. The number of committees and number of persons on each committee to be regulated by the nature and character of the work to be done. Committeemen shall serve for a term of one year, or for the length of time specified at the time of their appointment. Their duties shall be outlined at the time of their appointment.

Article VIII. Order of Business.—The following shall be the order of business at all regular meetings of the bureau and officers:

1. Call to order by the president.
2. Reading of the minutes of the last meeting.
3. Report of committees.
4. Unfinished business.
5. Communications from State Leader or Farm Advisor.
6. Reports of officers.
7. New business.
8. Adjournment.



The farm bureaus represent coöperation in community enterprises. Silo raisings are held, like old-fashioned barn raisings. The neighbors turn in and put up a silo in two days under the direction of a representative from the College of Agriculture.

Article IX. Amendment.—This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular or special meeting. Notice of such amendment must be given at least two weeks in advance.

Article X. Enacting Clause.—Section 1.—This constitution shall be in effect on and after its adoption.

Section 2.—All officers elected at the time this constitution is adopted shall hold office only until next annual meeting.

BY-LAWS

No. 1.—A member shall be considered to have been properly notified of any proposed action of the bureau by its officers whenever such notice shall have been mailed to each member or published in two issues of such county papers as may be designated by the officers.

No. 2.—Whenever a farm bureau center shall organize, with a minimum of ten charter members, it may immediately elect its director, who shall hold office until the next annual meeting. The center may then apply to the officers of the Farm Bureau for a seat for its director in the Board of Directors.

No. 3.—An organized center shall be entitled to a center bureau headquarters, at which, if requested, the Farm Advisor shall be present on the regular schedule at least once a month, insofar as his schedule will permit. At such time it will be the object of the Farm Advisor to meet members of the bureaus and others, and to furnish such aid as may be requested.

No. 4.—The director for each organized center will have charge of the local headquarters of the bureau and will make such arrangements for the Farm Advisor while there as will best conserve the time of the advisor and serve the interests of the county.

No. 5.—Departments of the Farm Bureau may be organized, and may be later abolished, by vote of the Board of Directors of the Farm Bureau. Only members of the Farm Bureau shall be members of departments therein. The organization of a department shall include:

(*a*) Members of the department within each center, to be known as ..... center section of ..... department.

(*b*) A committee in each center to be known as the "..... center committee on ....."

(*c*) A committee of the Board of Directors to be known as the Farm Bureau Committee on "....." Center committees shall report through their directors to the farm bureau committee, who in turn shall submit all reports to the Board of Directors of the Farm Bureau.



The farm bureaus throughout the state have undertaken various forms of marketing enterprises for the benefit of their members. Auction sales of livestock have helped to provide a wide market for fat stock.